

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending. By this Response, claims 1, 3 and 7 are amended. Reconsideration and allowance based on the above amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito, et al. (US 6,529,644) in view of Hoffman (COMPCON '95) in view of Hoyt, et al. (US 2001/0011262). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

For reasons of brevity, applicants hereby incorporate the remarks filed in the Response dated July 11, 2005.

In embodiments of the present invention, a notification of a possibility to add an input/output device to the image capture ring system is displayed for a potential user. Upon payment by the user of a predetermined monetary amount, the notification system provides further information regarding the user desired input/output system to be added. The system determines whether the desired input/output device has been added and notifies the user of the status. The notification indicates whether the desired input/output device is already connected or can be connected and states when the system is ready to add the device.

In contrast, Ito's system merely provides an external input terminal 82, which allows connection of an external device. When a monetary value, i.e., coin is inserted in the system, the system determines whether a device is connected to the external input terminal or not. If a device is connected to the external input terminal, then a changeover switch causes a change in the connection of the device to connect to the external terminal. If a device is not connected to

the external input terminal, then the switch is not changed and communication to the video camera is maintained. See column 11, lines 60 through column 12 lines 26.

Ito does not notify a user or make a determination of connection ability for a desired input/output unit from one or more input/output devices. Ito merely determines if a device is connected or not to the external input terminal.

Also, the Office Action alleges that Hoyt teaches providing instructions to a user and thus it is well known to notify users in the manner claimed by applicant. Applicants respectfully disagree.

In Hoyt, an “attract loop” is used in which a predetermined sequence of presentations are displayed to potential users regarding the use of the photo booth. Applicants agree that it is known to provide instructional information to users or potential users of a device. However, the above teaching of providing instructional information does not meet the limitations of applicant’s independent claims. Applicants recite a specific manner in which specific notification information is provided to the user. Specifically, embodiments of applicants invention provide a specific notification of adding input/output units prior to payment by a user and a different notification of the possibility of adding a desired input/output unit, whether it’s already connected, can be connected and when the system is ready to add the connection, after payment by a user. Hoyt, in contrast, continuously displays the same presentation over and over. The presentation is not based on a user payment or a determination of a specific desired input/output device by a user and thus not modified based on user selection of a desired input/output unit. Further, nowhere does Hoyt teach or suggest this feature.

Finally, Hoffman fails to make up for Ito and Hoyt's deficiencies. Hoffman is relied upon merely to teach an IEEE interface. Hoffman does not teach or suggest anything beyond the IEEE 1394 interface relevant to the claim limitations.

Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ito, Hoyt and Hoffman fail to teach each and every feature of applicant's independent claims 1, 3 and 7 as required. Also, dependent claims 2, 4-6, 8 and 9 are also distinguishable for the above reasons as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-9 are distinguishable over the cited art. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

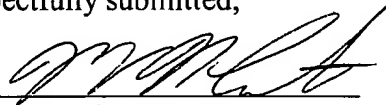
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Chad J. Billings (Reg. No. 48,917) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: December 30, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

By



Michael R. Cammarata

Registration No.: 39,491

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East,

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorneys for Applicant